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himself, who permits this, yet whose work we, like others, have found stimulating and helpful, and at times brilliant. Mr. Douglas evidently has no sense of humor and proportion; but has Mr. Watts-Dunton none?

AN ANCIENT AND A MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL THINKER.

SOCRATES. By Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A. *The World's Epoch-Makers*, Edited by Oliphant Smeaton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1905.

ERNEST RENAN. By William Barry, D.D. *Literary Lives*. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1905.

A work on Socrates must always of necessity emphasize his teaching, its spirit, its method, and its conclusions and results. But intimately associated with this teaching is the life of Socrates, and still more so his death. For from the point of view of the religion and law of the Athenian State, the question is obtruded upon us, Was this death that of a martyr or a criminal?

To answer this question Mr. Forbes enters into a careful and somewhat minute discussion of the civic ideals and religious demands of the Athenian Greek, and finds this best expounded in the attitude toward religion and state by the three great dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. As is known, Socrates was antagonized and ridiculed by Aristophanes, who also antagonized the last of the three dramatists, Euripides, on somewhat the same grounds of rejection of belief in the gods and hostility to the existing order of things.

What then was Socrates' relation to the philosophers who preceded him? What was his relation to the existing doctrines of the State and the common Faith? How far are the pictures by Xenophon and Plato to be accepted or to be modified? That Socrates was a reformer, and so had made enemies and would be misunderstood and would bring down upon him both the honest and the scurrilous opposition of many, is undoubted; but is it proved that he was irreligious and taught others to be so, however enquiring and analytic his mental habits? Our author thinks not, and tries to set forth his reasons with impartiality and a close study of existing conditions. "His lifelong aim was to exploit a new soul in Athens." "Character must be

built on knowledge." But "it was not to the average man that Socrates made his appeal." And thus came about the tragedy, upon which Plato commented in his *Phædo*: "Such was the end . . . of our friend; concerning whom I may truly say, that of all the men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest, and justest, and best."

In passing from Socrates to Renan we jump over many ages and many peoples; yet both men were at least alike in that both were persecuted on account of religious questions, and both were devoted, in however different phases, to the life of knowledge and reason. Renan was held to be the most brilliant Frenchman of his age, and his life entirely reflects that age. A Breton peasant, educated for the Church, he suffered an eclipse of faith, devoting himself passionately to his studies, exalting the conclusions of the reason to the utter exclusion of all matters of faith.

Renan visited Galilee and, carried away by his methods, he portrayed the background of Palestine vividly and Christ as the central peasant figure in the landscape. This resulted in his remarkable *Vie de Jésus* (Life of Christ) in 1863. The same method was employed in the East and in Rome in another remarkable volume "In St. Paul's Footsteps." His purpose was to realize, to materialize, St. Paul and Christ. In the very boldness and picturesqueness of his method, apart from his genius, he would have won a notable success. It was a veritable romance in biography he was achieving. Thus our author taxes Renan for portraying Paul before the Areopagus as a small, ugly Jew condemning beauty and denouncing Athens for its monuments and "idols."

Our author, it will be seen, while interesting and able, is not always sympathetic. The most brilliant piece of exposition by Renan he believes to be the interpretation of St. John's Revelation: its subject is the Roman Empire and Nero is Antichrist.

The solitariness of Renan—in heart and in mind—especially after the death of his devoted sister, is emphasized; and the author believes that the French war of 1870 made a profound impression upon him and in many ways changed his whole character. He became then a man for peace at any price; and his

tone afterwards developed even into the frivolous. Dr. Barry gives a luminous, interesting and consistent view of the man, whether it be the right approach or not. The book is especially worthy of note as the study of a rationalist, admittedly great and splendid, by one who still accepts revelation and conserves his faith.

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## ESSAYS AND DISCOURSES

GREATNESS IN LITERATURE and Other Papers. By W. P. Trent. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1905.

ESSAYS IN APPLICATION. By Henry van Dyke. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.

The difference in spirit and in subject matter between these two volumes of essays that have appeared simultaneously—one from the pen of a professor of English Literature in Columbia University and the other by the holder of a similar position in Princeton University—is well expressed in the title and is borne out in the contents, a series respectively of eight and twelve papers, essays, and addresses.

Professor Trent has brought together in his new volume eight essays under the title of the first of the series, "Greatness in Literature." Most of them have been papers before the English Clubs of our several universities, or before bodies of students and teachers; and all deal with literary topics, i.e., discussions about literature. What are the tests whereby we know great literature? If the inspiration may have come unconsciously years ago from Matthew Arnold's critical essays, the treatment and the answer is wholly Mr. Trent's, and the same catholic principles and severity of standards are present. This lingering influence of Matthew Arnold may perhaps be best seen in the estimate of Chaucer—it will be found that more justice is done Chaucer in the notable essay on poetry in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* by Mr. Watts-Dunton.

"A Word for the Smaller Writers" is not for the less excellent ones, but for those who appeal to special tastes. "Popular Judgment" is again used only of the writers of a high order of achievement—as an element in determining their final place.